

January 3, 2014

Paul Dewar, MP
1306 Wellington Street, Suite 304 (Main Office)
Ottawa ON K1Y 3B2

Dear Mr. Dewar,

The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA) is the bargaining agent that represents over 7,800 employees of Canada Post, consisting of 95% women who work in 3,377 Rural Post Offices. Since 1902, CPAA has fought for the rights of rural post office employees and for full access to postal services for rural Canadians. Our struggles have focused on employment equity, pay equity, various benefits and the fight against rural post office closures. This is who we are, this is what we do.

Prior to Christmas, three (3) of my colleagues and I attended the emergency Transport Committee meeting convened to consider the Canada Post Corporation's Action Plan in Five Points. Unfortunately, we were only able to get status as observers. We were told it was too late to participate more fully.

We were very pleased with the questions you presented to Mr. Chopra, as they touched on some of the key points we would have liked to ask, had we had, the opportunity to appear in front of the Committee.

As stakeholders in the future of the Corporation's sustainability and the resolution of **our** Pension issues, we feel it is important to reach out to your party and establish lines of communications to work at finding solutions to these problems. Despite reaching out to Mr. Chopra and Minister Flaherty, CPAA was never consulted in the development of this Action Plan nor were we involved, like many other stakeholders and interest groups, in the consultation process that preceded it.

In the '80s, under the Mulroney government, the Corporation developed a corporate plan to close rural Corporate Post Offices and to instead establish franchises from coast to coast to coast. CPAA, along with community members managed to put a halt to the closures and a Moratorium was established. The Corporation now has a new strategy to close Corporate Post Offices with the same end result.

Let me explain: starting a few years back, the Corporation began closing post offices on Saturdays, lunch hours, changing hours of service with later opening times and early closings. Often times, our members work in offices that are short-staffed and are told to delay the mail until they can get to it. It is clear that the goal of the Five-Point Action Plan is to change the Corporation until we are no longer the "convenient" Post Office, so that consumers should instead embrace the franchises with their convenient hours, week-end service and accessible parking.

To quote from this Action Plan: "Strengthening Canada Post's retail network is not just about adding more franchise post offices, it is about adding more convenient post offices."

By reducing the hours of service to the public in Corporate Post Offices, CPC management has been setting us up to fail. The announcement of a price increase and a reduction of service all on the same day, has caused a lot of disgruntled customers, this at the busiest time of the year.

Olivia Chow stated: "...you don't save a business by cutting services, driving away customers and raising costs..."

Furthermore, Canada Post's 2012 Annual Report states that the most economical way to deliver mail per address is a postal box in a Post Office.

In October of 2013, CPAA sent a letter to Deepak Chopra stating our willingness to work with Canada Post and offered some suggestions. We informed Mr. Chopra that there are many rural communities and First Nations across Canada that do not have financial institutions. Rural Post Offices are an ideal place for even limited banking services. We reminded the CEO that the infrastructure is already set up and our members (his employees) are security cleared and bonded. We were informed that the Corporation reviewed banking services in Post Offices and that this would not be a necessary service because the needs are already being met for Canadians. This statement is in stark contrast to that of the previous Canada Post CEO, Ms. Moya Green, who welcomed then and now the idea of adding a revenue stream to the Corporation.

Canada Post never asked for CPAA's input, nor could they inform us to what extent they had asked for input from Canadians living in rural and remote communities. In the Action Plan, it is stated that forty-six (46) communities across the country were visited by CPC executives to get their input. Of those forty-six (46), only two (2) were in towns with CPAA offices. They are both in Manitoba, i.e. Carman and Niverville. Once again, CPAA was never invited to these meetings, where the future of the Corporation, which affects our members and the communities they work in, was discussed. Interestingly enough, these two (2) communities are in Conservative ridings. This suggests to us, that if you invite the right target group, you will receive the responses you are looking for.

The Corporation must realize that in its rural Post Offices, it has an enormous amount of hard working, loyal community-orientated employees who strive to make the Corporation succeed. What Canada Post is proposing to do, will waste that asset and threaten its future.

Regards,

original signed by:

Brenda McAuley
National President
Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association

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